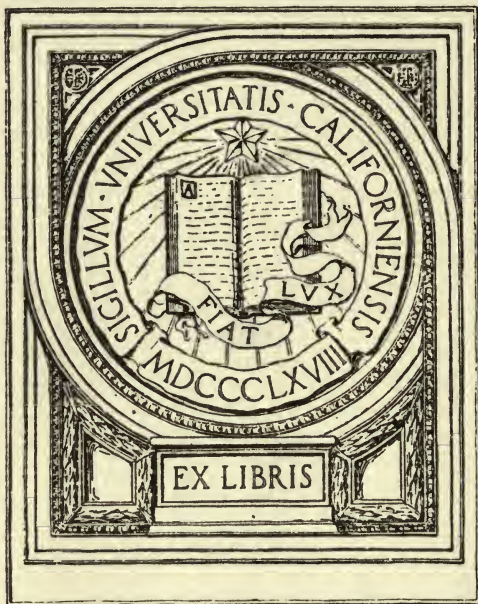




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For Mrs F. J. Sullivan

a small token of deep gratitude  
for many, many kindnesses  
received by

Mrs S. A. Woodruff, Sister -  
(Cousin of the Author  
of these poems)

June 1911 —



# POEMS



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# POEMS

BY LEONARD SHOOBIDGE

//

THE  
BODLEY HEAD

LONDON: JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD  
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMX

THE  
MUSEUM  
OF  
NATURAL  
HISTORY

PHELAN

*Turnbull & Spears, Printers, Edinburgh*



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## POEMS



Univ. of  
California

I





## MORNING

SWEET fresh dawn that now is ours,

Where may this new journey lead—

How shall this day seem decreed

At evening hours?

Within the space of tender grey

One red cloud of sunset's hue

Tells that night shall claim its due,

At close of day.

GUESSED in your look

A face beyond, above ;

You were the book

In which he learned to love :

Held in your touch

He dreamed the things unseen ;

Sightless his eyes for such

Had not your kindness been.

ONCE as a bird in the hand  
Soft and near,  
You are flown to the vacant sky  
Which is blank and clear.

Far hence it seems that I hear  
Your sad cry :  
And I walk in a darkening land  
Where memories die.

## BEFORE AND AFTER

How will you seem

Pale hours of mingled mist and light ?

A tale, an omen ? echo, or a dream,

Soft blindness or some further sight ?

Dust in the day's bright beam,

Fire-flies across the sombre night,

When the one hour stands high above your  
quivering gleam ?

When the hour lives the summing up of all

The dimly dreamed ;

When in the dawn the voices to the voices  
call

A clarion clearness where the mystery seemed :

Pale hours that lead perchance to one high  
pulse supreme,

Kind hours the last perchance before the  
shuddering fall—

How will you seem?

## GONE ABOVE TO HIS PLACE

MINE was thy hand  
To go a little way ;  
I will not ever stand  
To mar thy day :  
Most kind to stay  
Awhile upon thy road ;  
I'll bear the after-load  
As best I may.

Home is for such  
As thou, in lands apart ;  
Leave but a footprint's touch  
On this, my heart.

Gone, mists athwart,  
Far hence, who wast so near ;  
So far above, but dear  
As still thou art.

HE poured the vital roseate wine ;  
The chasings of the crystal cup  
Illumined as the wine rose up,  
Diamond to ruby, shape and line.

It rose and quivered to the rim,  
It made the goblet's lip aglow :  
The crystal's finest atoms know  
The warmth and wealth that come from him.



THE dream was of a golden star  
Set in the night's unfathomed dome,  
It moved the spirit from its far  
Desire's home.

Somewhere that lamp of light is set  
Beyond the mists that move between,  
And if it be not shining, yet  
The dream has been.

HE called the breezes of the south  
To play upon the clustering hair,  
To linger on the roseate mouth  
Sweet sighs evoking there :

Sighs in the soul, and fear, and all  
A host of fancy's shimmering lights ;  
Gleams in the dusk, when love-notes call  
Through perfumed sultry nights.

WE lingered on the stairs to see

The close of day :

You seemed too sweet and dear to me

For words to say.

We watched the moon rise up the pane,

Close to a star :

Ah—moments may not come again

That perfect are.

THE pathos of the passing year,  
The oft-repeated ever true  
Analogy, of death more near  
To me and you ;

Enwraps us in a tender fear,  
Has filled the autumn day we see,  
And makes each passing moment dear  
To you and me.

## PARTED

So very little some might say,  
Yet just enough to part us twain :  
And we must follow each our way  
Nor hope to meet indeed again.

Speak shall we? Yes ; the words that know  
Scarce kindred with the very sweet  
Few words you spoke : and we shall grow  
More far apart each time we meet.

## LAST ECHOES

YOUR hands no longer touch the keys,  
Your voice no longer fills the air,  
The room's the same, the flowers, the trees,  
Another sings the music there.

Within the words you used to sing,  
Within the notes you used to play,  
A power is silent and they ring  
No more as once they did, to-day.

And in the heart that beat so fast,  
That each one thing in you did prize,  
Is silence too ; and saddest, last,  
The tears are dry within the eyes.

## A THOUGHT

THE plumage of a bird, so white—

One wave upon a moon-lit sea—

Round as a pearl is to the sight—

Fair as a sudden melody ;

Dear is the thought : a breath, a glow,

It moves amid the air of things—

And ever closer, subtler, grow

The mysteries of its communings.

I KNOW the wealth that decks the shrine,  
Each stately pier, each fine-cut gem ;  
And in the sky the diadem  
Of marble pinnacles a-shine :

My eyes are rich in thought of them—

Yet that which moves me through and through  
And that which holds my life in grip,  
Is neither mind nor heart nor lip ;  
But you, but you and you.



ALL lives by death. So beats each heart ;  
The flowers that break the buds apart  
Reveal the year's recurrence : all  
Sweet songs in measure rise and fall.

While far in space each golden sun  
Grows warm or cold, for rest is none.

IT is the deep relentless stream  
Which holds us, if we will or nay,  
Greater than we. An hour, a day,  
A year, what matters? All is dream.

There waits the greater boundless sea  
Before us—hollow vale and crest—  
Foam to the stars—and on its breast  
We can alone contented be.

LONG years ago  
The great bronze bell  
Learnt the full voice  
Of that deep soul.  
We listen to its distant toll,  
And wonder, is there any choice  
To bid love come and hatred go?

It seems to tell  
Of places fair  
We have not seen  
And shall not see :  
The might have been that will not be,

The memories that have not been,  
The wonders in the islands where  
Our journeys may not ever go.

## A HOUSE UNINHABITED

FOR I had meant the garden's sweetness  
To pass through windows wide,  
That summer's wealth in rich completeness  
Should there within abide.

And I had meant the breath of roses,  
To scent our house all through :  
But few things come as love proposes,  
And I was nought to you.

## SOLITUDINES

HIGH in the branches, hear, a cry  
Repeated ; something living knows  
The terror that its life must die.

Lives that we cannot touch—  
And we ourselves are such  
As those.

The land has sunk below the sea,  
The long waves heave, the darkness grows ;  
One bird still tracks the ship, and we  
Watch the white emblem of ourselves.

THE spirit wanders in the hills  
Which was your charm, your voice ;  
Still to the brim our fountain fills.

Whose was the chance or choice ?  
And whence the change from choice or chance ?

I mark but heartless years  
Dropping beneath the sunbeams' dance  
To fill the fount with tears.

## IN THE OPEN

How great the night, how still, how wide—

Beneath the stars on every side,

The trees, the fields, the woods are spread.

Luxurious greatness, mighty rest—

The earth is like a mother's breast

Whereon may sleep life's weary head.



“ UCCELLI CHE SONO IN MARE ”

BIRDS of the sea—Birds of the sea—

On the air, to the sea,

On the air—

Souls of the dead—Gone from the land

From the touch of the hand

Going where?

Near you the surge, round you the sky,

And the ships going by

On their way.

Round them the sea, near them the fate,

Be it quick, be it late,

As it may.

Groves that you knew shine in the light

Or are dim through the night

Dewy wet.

Hearts that have loved, loves that should live,

Will forget and forgive,

And forget.

WAS it ours that distant pain ?  
Quietness falls on stream and hill,  
Plenitudes of colour fill  
All the width of wood and plain.

Thoughts we knew so harsh and weak,  
Wrought to chords profound and strong ;  
Changed into a breath of song,  
Words we could not bear to speak.

## AT NIGHT

THEY look within each other's eyes,  
The lake to star, the star to lake :  
And clouds that up the sky arise  
Keep still, abashed, for pity's sake.

The mountains stand in silent praise ;  
No ripple mars the water's sheen :  
While such reunion night repays  
To those that daylight stood between.

## LECTORI SALVE

COULD one but know  
That as a tendril of a vine  
Suddenly the thought will grow—  
His dream from mine.

Then winter's rest  
Of rugged stems that lifeless seem  
Were surely in its waiting blest—  
His life, my dream.

. . . . .

His fancy shows  
Its moving tendril fresh and fine ;  
All shadowy our trellis grows—  
His dreams and mine.



## II





HOMES of the soul,  
That seemed as though they were  
Waiting attuned for us to pass the gate  
When first we came,  
Homes of the soul—  
For us they seem to live, for us to wait,  
Once intimately felt and so eternally the  
same.

Wide are the seas  
To traverse, and the plain  
Various, rich, before we pass the gate  
again,

Move in again beneath the shadowy trees :

To hear once more

The same chant sung, the same stream fall,

To see the same light touch the glimmering  
wall,

To feel the same thoughts come as years  
before ;

And be ourselves the same, as though we  
dreamed

The journeying hours, unreal now,

That in their passage real seemed.

## FEBRUARY

ABOUT us fitful strangeness lay,  
As round the snowdrops lay the snow,  
That each night fell, but passed away  
Beneath the stronger sunlight's glow  
Each longer, almost springlike day.

Till last the true spring came to dwell  
Radiant around each flower and leaf,  
And no more snowflakes ever fell—  
And strangeness, once so real a grief,  
Seems folly now we love so well.

## TO A PICTURE

“OH, break into a smile and own  
That somewhere in some quiet place,  
There dwells a mirage of the face,  
The dearest I have ever known.

“Nor seem remote with those kind eyes  
Ours never more can see and hold.”  
The tender eyes were far and cold  
And saddened with a dim surprise.

## UNA QUIDEM EST CONSOLATIO

SAFE from dragging of all loads—

Safe from trailing of the feet—

Could you tell on life's strange roads,

What fate once you might not meet?

Eyes that none can fill with tears—

Heart that nought can wring with pain—

Peaceful through all troubled years,

Sleeping, would you wake again?

## ANIMULA

FINE tremulous flame,

Alive within the chamber of my thought alone,

Familiar still ; for all the outer world un-  
known—

Forgotten features, voice unwritten, unre-  
membered name.

Poor flickering glow—

While yet the twilit chamber of my life is  
mine

Held vital yet, since memory through the  
darkening shrine

Moves with soft feet and murmurs thoughts  
that paler grow.

## EARLY MARCH

WIDE and very pure and still  
Faint though clear by plain and hill  
Abides the tender wintry sky.

No wind there is : a warmer ray  
Bids us call it Spring to-day  
And fancy "This day none should die."

Very good to breathe and dwell,  
Live to-day : and yet most well  
Within so sweet an earth to lie.

For both are one, the life, the death.  
All the world is filled with breath  
That pulses rich with melody.

## THE RIFT IN THE LUTE

"FOLD, grey day,  
Your mantle grey,  
Of grey and rainful cloud ;  
Let every loud  
Wind hold away."

But like a blast across the moor  
Came the cry of the weak and poor  
Between the night and day.

"Break, brief leaf,  
To greenness brief,  
And brief bright summer's hour  
Of gleaming flower  
Rich golden sheaf."



But yet by branches green again  
Went forth a cry like trembling pain  
That shivered every leaf.  
And as a murmur through the grass  
Moved the feet of lives that pass  
To come not back again.

YOU are not she :

But notes within your utterance sound

Like whispers that the air moves round

From tree to tree.

For all is hers—

The tender voice of countless leaves,

The murmuring of golden sheaves

Or moonlit firs.

She is no more

Within my reach to love : and yet

Her seal on all I love is set

For evermore.

## RAIN

SAD heart, vexed spirit, how have you spent  
The day of the long chill rain,  
While the wind from the west with its wet  
blast went  
By the windows ever again?

I thought how seldom a heart draws nigh  
A heart to be loved and known ;  
How the wind and the rain and the human  
cry  
Sweep on through the world alone.

“ I LOVE to take your hand and go  
    Beneath blue skies :  
The reds of roses richer grow  
    Beneath your eyes :  
I think I hardly knew a Spring,  
    Till you were there :  
Or poise and dart of swallow's wing :  
    You're everywhere.”

It seemed a pretty thing to say  
    (I felt it too),  
You trembled and you looked away,  
    I turned to you :

"But I'd be only in one place,"

    You breathed and sighed,

"Your heart." So weaker fancy's grace

    You thrust aside.

THE house is just as stately ; fair  
Its gardens, and the trees have grown  
Yet higher, nobler : she alone  
Is absent, vanished, that was there.

Yet all the rooms are sweet and still,  
Rich too with scent as then of flowers  
Whose radiance fading marks the hours  
In vases that she used to fill.

While summer clouds sweep on above  
And in the gardens thrushes sing—  
There wants but yet one other thing,  
The human voice I used to love.

THE day was perfect, and the perfect blue  
Of sky unbroken by one shred of cloud,  
The drowsy earth seemed like a sleeper  
bowed,

The old Hall silent with its grove of yew.

We stepped inside a chamber where we knew  
A picture hung of which the house was proud,  
By Francia, in a room where never loud  
Voice came and looking where the lilies grew.

Its mellow sky was tender, white and dim,  
Behind the bending of Madonna's head,  
And seemed to bless the faintly broken  
plain.

And there we saw how it had seemed to him  
Who wrought this picture. Whence such  
light was shed  
As made that day grow twice more fair  
again.



## ECHOES

THE world seems not the world, although  
This brook is real and past its bed  
Across a wide dun field I go,  
And know  
Its crop is harvested.

My soul's apart in other years  
Gone on before in some dim place,  
Or dreads new life that nought endears  
And fears  
There not to see one face.

The world is strange and blankly fair.  
I think it seems as it would be

If you breathed not the moving air,

Or were

Not ever dear to me.

## SOUVENIR D'UN AMI

PINK fragile rose, whose petals pale  
Grow fainter ever as they leave  
Thy central depths and seem to grieve  
That they are blanched, that they are frail.

Some poet named thee, made thee speak  
The sorrow that a friend must bear,  
Who feels the memories that were  
Most strong and present, pale and weak.

## SEPTEMBER

ALL the air is warm and still,  
All our garden yet is bright,  
Nor any day at summer's height  
Did ever richer glory fill.

All the scents are full and sweet ;  
Where our arbour'd path is green,  
Just one leaf falls down between  
The passage of our moving feet.

Ah, I think your finer sense  
Feels some touch on you or me,  
To tell how winter soon will be,  
Now summer, smiling, passes hence.

THE autumn dies ; the haunting snow  
Foretells its coming through the air :  
The field, the forest, seem to know  
That soon it will be lying there.

Is such grey shade  
The change definitive, to-day ?  
So many days have light and darkness made,  
Is this day not as they ?

THUS I would have it. You should be  
The master of the ancient place,  
And I your guest. Young still the face,  
The firelight shows it keen and free.

Fresh from our ride athwart the breeze  
We linger in the darkening hall ;  
The rooks come home, a call, a call—  
Then all is silence in the trees.

## NOVEMBER

THE silver lights of dawn remain  
On past the noon to evening's hour,  
The shifting mist returns again,  
And slowly night resumes its power.

The pallid light, the chilly air  
Seem almost human, faint and brief,  
Yet scarcely sad : as though there were  
An inner peace within this grief.

THE twilight's gradual deepening,  
The shrinking day ;  
A hall wherein pale echoes sing  
And dead harps play ;  
Where suddenly upon the pane a wing  
Strikes and is gone, and all the sky is grey.



## DECEMBER

CLOSE the mist is brooding round,

The trees are great, remote and pale,

Mysterious worlds in which the frail

Thoughts die, and every muffled sound

Cowers to silence blank and far.

Where is certain love or trust ?

Where the gaze of eyes that quite

Move out to ours, whose truest sight

Would dare acknowledge how we must,

Should be, simply what we are ?

All are lonely ; not one heart  
Beats atune and all at one  
With other hearts, and almost none  
Live, that do not live apart.

A LILT of words is in the ear,  
Call, spirit, call to distant things  
To draw them with desire near.

The air is full of living wings—  
A music in the whole world sings.  
The writing on the page is here.



### III



## IN THE BREEZE

BLUE eyes to the space of the sea—

Gold hair to the corn of the land—

Oh eyes drawn to the love to be,

Hair so soft in palm of the hand—

White foam give birth to new love,

Change turn into love in our sight—

Oh corn, corn, the great sun is above—

Ripen, break to touch of his light.

Red flowers that grow in the corn,

Death's voice and the corn between,

Oh make gift to the love new-born,

Kill all pain that ever has been.

MIRROR high set and silent as a star,  
Dead diamond, moonstone, vague mysterious  
gem,  
Aloof from images of things and yet alive by  
reason of the life in them.

Faces and flowers, laughter and tears, they  
are ;

But you the mirage temple where they all  
In long procession pass and all merge and  
emerge to music of oblivion's call.



YOU raise a child up for a while  
To see the outer passing things :  
You watch its face, each object brings  
A look, and so a frown or smile.

Life calls its creatures for a span  
Whole worlds to see and seem to know :  
The changeful pale perceptions grow  
And fade across the face of man.

## EVENING RAIN

THE first sharp rain-drops touch one chosen  
leaf,

The dust lies dense upon the straight high-  
way ;

Beneath the closing vaults of leaden  
grey

The earth is sleepy as in weary grief :

Ah, life is dull, we think, and yet too  
brief—

While on the floor that those clouds build  
there may

Be starbeams dancing, airy sprites a-sway,

A moving band of whom the moon is  
chief.

And up above our weariness there dwell

Stars of high thought and moonbeams of  
desire,

That tread the clouds and dance with feet  
a-fire ;

And bid us whisper " All might yet be well

If but our hands could never fail or tire

To strike the chords and sweep the spirit's  
lyre."

## IN THE VINEYARDS

WE could not see the singer of our song,  
Fresh from the earth among the vines it rose ;  
Young was the voice, the young man's voice,  
and strong.

Thus from the stem the vine's new vigour  
shows

New flight of impulse to the year's new sun—  
The cadence slackens and the singer goes—

May love await him now his work is done.

## HER LOVE

YOU judge him if you like. Ask why

“Bears he himself with that hard frown,  
Goes upward treading others down?”

But always I  
Desire his unbalked demand  
And love to feel within his hand  
My fingers crushed until I cry.

About me goes the world and all  
Its business, pleasure ; and I take  
My share within them for one sake,  
Which is to fall  
Prone at his feet and lay all there,  
The wealth of all the gifts that were  
His always all.

## THE JUDGE

THERE you lie dead, whom all men deemed  
me hating.

Who measures love save by his own behest?  
Must Angels stand unmoved to doom's abating?  
Surely your sin might ask a little rest.

You are gone hence, gone hence to your  
requiting.

Oh, were I judge, high judge, to set you free—  
Mine is the sword that justice asks for smiting,  
Be it not false that you so injured me.

If mine the wrong, then why not mine forgiving?  
Yours was the fall, then mine the hand to raise.

I am the one to smooth your paths of living.

Who else can judge what only I appraise?

Yes, side by side we'll stand for our defending.

I'll keep erect and hold you while they speak.

Rest till I come, your knight of pity's sending,

Am I not strong and you so very weak?

## TWENTY TO THIRTY

THINK you my smile  
Is fashioned so for you,  
Should I seem vile  
If you my secrets knew?  
Your presence through  
(But sweet is love's defile),  
Like travellers do  
I look beyond, awhile.

Dwelt you once set  
Bright jewel in a soul?  
Are your eyes wet  
With tears for love once whole?



Raise then the bowl,  
And beckon to me yet—  
Love I'll cajole,  
And love shall you forget.

## PRESENTIMENT

SHE sat and looked upon her fair white hands,  
Warm in the firelight as the day grew dull,  
She had not stepped apart from God's  
commands,  
There came no memory which she need  
annul.

Pure hands, whose fingers had not wrought  
one wrong—  
Wherefore the sadness of the eyes' fixed  
look?—

Within the twilight rose the clouds in throng,  
And leafless branches in the weird wind  
shook.

BOY's love ! unconscious speaking of a rhyme,  
First childish humming of love's untaught  
lay ;

Shall this die out within the fresh spring time,  
Accounted pretty and so fade away ?

It seems the lifting of a calm warm sea,  
Closed by long islands from the ocean's main ;  
And in a boat that passes glidingly,  
One dips her hand in it, and smiles again.

## MOSAIC

WITHIN the dome of sombre chastened gold  
Through deep-set windows from a far blue  
sky  
The rays descend, in golden shades to  
die,  
In glowing quietude mellowed deep and  
old.  
Figured are there the saints whose hands  
still hold  
The emblems of the toil and pain gone  
by,  
Who stand by Christ to hear each sorrow's  
cry  
The endless murmur of men's griefs untold.

But small bright star-flowers grow around the  
feet

That walked the path of holiness and pain,  
Sweet to the soul with consolation's  
voice ;

And fair-leaved palms arched up above them  
meet,

As if the saints might love the shade again,  
Where once they rested on their path of  
choice.

## BY THE WINDOW

NOT worthy am I yet to feel  
The touch of hands so strong, so true :  
And as from nights most clear and deep  
We turn and sigh, move in and sleep,  
So turn my eyes away from you.

Oh, could a mist but upwards steal  
(The mist that glides all down the mead)  
To veil the calm, intenser space,  
And hide the eyes in heaven's face :  
Oh then were we more near indeed.

## BETWEEN THE DANCES

WE are friends ; the music's woken,  
Round us shines the polished floor.  
Strange to feel there must be spoken  
One last word, and then no more.

It may be your smile's now greeting  
That small word ; nor have we known  
How its sound shall end our meeting,  
When all steps are moved alone.

COLD words you spoke, some chance you failed

To take as you would take it now

To please me : have these so prevailed,

That all the rest has shrunk and paled ?

I neither hear nor mark them now.

But in this fuller union's light

That now is ours as we are now,

A sorrow rises : for I might

Have stood so blameless in your sight,

Had I been then as I am now.



## A FACE

I SEEM to see the end

Revealed before me, momentwise.

The smiles of light no more defend

That hollowness of eyes.

I seem to see his face

As it will be when hope is dim—

Surely no other will replace

What we have found in him?

## PALE GOLD

NOTHING in you perfect, rounded—  
Golden hair that seems too pale,  
Form too slight, and eyes soon sounded  
Where the flashes quickly fail.

Still we love you through your being  
Full of music's broken airs,  
And a nature's unforeseeing  
Of our tedious whys and wheres.

As a little moss-born river  
Humming flows beneath the grass,  
You can make a man's heart quiver,  
When your lightsome footsteps pass.

WE parted and I took my fill  
Of eyes and all the lines of face ;  
And thought " I'll hold it come what will,  
In any place  
Of all world's space."

We parted—and a voice grew clear,  
As clear as streams no weeds defile,  
" Be thankful that your friend was here,  
A little while  
With friendship's smile."

We parted—but we met again,  
Yes, often. Till as morning grew

One day through showers of autumn rain

I woke and knew

No thought of you :

But you had passed from joy and pain.

## AT PALERMO

HELD in the breeze the orange branches move.

I stand beside the turquoise sapphire sea  
And wish that I could cease to think of thee,  
My far half-love !

But for the half-smile of your faint pale flower,  
In summer garden rich with deep content  
I had been now perchance ; there others went,  
Each in his hour.

Time was it then for flight to Southern sun,  
They went the others southward on desire ;  
Home waited there beneath the fuller fire  
For everyone.

But under rustle of those wings above,  
To love to think the half-smile if I may,  
Whole summer's smile of sunny livelong day ;  
Is that not love ?

## IN A BALL-ROOM

THEY met that evening and they spoke

A few words linked by chance,

When violins with a sigh awoke

The air to bid us dance.

He watched the grace that could but win

The eyes, the even breath ;

And felt the power of soul within—

They parted until death.

They parted—but she bore his face,

The high, the brave, the clear,

Where'er she went in every place,

It made the good more dear.

For they were fashioned so to be  
Each for the other quite  
Complete. And neither he nor she  
Knew love, the true, the right.



ALONE?—Within my fingers seem  
Enclosed your nervous tender hands,  
The solitude becomes the dream  
And near and true the presence stands.

Together?—If a dream can throw  
Warm colour on the pallid eyes,  
Perchance a moment ; till we know  
The mockery of paradise.

## SPRING

ALL'S returning, all is burning, all is clear—  
All seems hopeful, bright in yearning,  
But we are sad for unreturning  
Of what was dear.

Spring is tender, spring will render all things  
fair—  
Earth now makes her bride's surrender,  
Only to the griefs not tender,  
That we must bear.

We are broken, by sure token, from the Spring ;  
Since of all the birds awoken  
Not ever one whose wing is broken  
Will fly and sing.

## TRIVIA

MORTEM morituri salutamus—

It came, which was the man unknown,  
like us.

(Each hour the many live, the dead are  
few—).

There moved a stillness through the  
crowd and hum—

(Hats raised and horses reined—) the  
mystery grew

A moment near, then passed upon its way.

Morituri te

Salutamus mortuum.

WE two have known each other,  
By touch of mind and heart ;  
What is it yet, my brother,  
That holds us still apart ?

Is it the self-prevailing  
In strength of thought and breath ?  
Or vision of the failing,  
And end of all in death ?

## ALONE

WE passed an Island of the tropic sea,  
Aflame and throbbing to the noon-day sun,  
Hot, lonely rocks, where never once will  
run

The feet of children, lovers' footsteps be.  
No leaf grew on it, not a flower. No tree  
Had risen there and breaking upwards won  
Its crown of glory, no kind act been done  
Within its borders. It was lonely, free.

Our deck swirled past it with the awning  
spread,  
Bright dresses clustering as a bed of flowers  
Set in a garden that a fresh air sweeps.

But it lies, ever solitary, dead :

With foam around it in tempestuous hours,

Or thrall'd in silence when the ocean sleeps.

## AT BAYREUTH

LET them gather here all those who have never  
Touched with their lips the lips they prize ;  
Those whom the years as they vanish will  
sever

Further away from the face and eyes  
That they fain would see.

Let them gather here when lights are made  
lower,

Violins pant in dead dark air,  
Wake with a laugh, and then fail and are  
slower,

Telling the tale that is true all where  
By a great decree.

Let them gather here and sing with the  
singing,

Float on the storm of love and song,  
Clasp the dear form in a dream that is  
bringing

Lips to their lips that have waited long  
For the kiss to be.

While without the firs in the star-lit night

Stand with a murmur of wind in each bough  
Where the ground is crisp to the passing feet,  
And the scented boughs enlace and meet,

Meet so close as to scarce allow  
A glimpse of the sky where the stars are  
bright.



## THE MOSLEM'S TOMB

THE tomb is set in gardens where deep space  
Of leaves and shade beside the marble ways  
That edge the pool, bore flowers for all the  
days

Throughout the years of all his life, whose place  
For pleasure this was once. His living face  
Caught here the smile of friends ; and  
while the blaze

Of sun lay scorching on the plains, a maze  
Of foliage closed around the marble's grace.

This was his pleasure house in life. At last  
The guests unwittingly his latest passed  
The splendid gate that he re-entered dead.

And now amid the gardens by the pool,  
The tomb stands softly gleaming, shaded, cool,  
Like calm quiescence that repels all dread.

## MURANO

SOME say that it was poisoned wine  
Red in the glass beyond compare—  
Fine was the glass, its lip most fine ;  
The red lips touched it quivering there.

And now the eyes have peace, for they  
Have seen the vision, the desired—  
Rich grows the closing of the day—  
Row to the sunset, life is tired.

## HEIMWEH

THE words stand written ; but our hearts  
return

To that unshapen misty sense we knew,

And homewards thither from the sound we  
yearn

Towards the hours wherein the passion  
grew.

Shall there be one unspeaking of all speech,

Fresh with the freedom of a wide pure  
sea,

Like mighty sudden wave-wash on the beach

That drowns the footmarks, leaves the  
broad sands free ?

## A MIRROR

FADED and dim

I cannot live but dreaming now :

The lines of gold which are my carven rim  
Of honey seem and gold-dust, pale and old.

And when the light

Strikes on my face it makes strange hues  
Of dance that dies, and all the balmy night  
Faintly the tapers flicker in my eyes.

And all the night

Sweet and persistent sings a song,  
Most dear refrain, across my shadowy sight ;  
“ Life was and is not, is and is again.’

## BY THE SHORE

PURE and calm the fir trees stand  
Each in commune with a star,  
And the snow is stretching far,  
Veiling all the silent land,  
All the forest, to the shore.

Snow of foam and foam of snow  
Leave a sandy narrow strip,  
Touch from touch and lip from lip  
Failing, sundered ever so ;  
While the stars grow more and more.

# IV





## VISHNU

“OH Vishnu, hear us, for the sky is thine—

Have pity soon and our blank hunger  
fill.

For ever on thy sacred altar will

The fruits lie glowing and the sweet flowers  
shine.”

The crowd moves thickly, and the placid  
kine

Pace the broad halls where bats are  
crying shrill :

Harsh music screams and deep green tanks  
lie still

And wide courts shadeless round the close-  
walled shrine.

There all is silent, and the God alone

In dense air weighted with the flowers those  
bring

Who seek some easing of their evil day :

While on the oil-stained surface of the stone

A bright blue insect with its airy wing

Lights for a moment and then flies away.

## BY THE BULWARKS

THE water's all around us both, wind swept  
on every side,

Its hidden depths beneath us shroud the secret  
of the tide :

And our ship moves heaving onwards, labour-  
ing slowly on,

And the world moves on for ever. But we  
shall die anon.

Cease to be friends, no longer near a heart, a  
voice, a hand :

Tossed ever on the mighty waste, apart from  
home and land.

WE have two moods, two visions, if we will.  
The one to see immensity in greatness and  
to say :

“ Vain pride, be still,  
A speck is man, a moment all his living day.”

But with the other in each grain of sand  
Again to see immensity in smallness, and to  
know

How high we stand  
Who breathe and live and from the sand did  
slowly grow.

## IN THE PARTHENON

UPGATHERED strength of hours and hours—

One hour of man's long day is whole,

Like scent of all a garden's flowers

Enshrined within one marble bowl.

So gained, a ridge that cuts the sky—

So heard a note that crowns the song—

Let then the feeble ages die

If but one hour be true and strong.

## IN THE LUXEMBOURG

HE dances, he dances—

Sweet solemn garden of the quieter way,

Proud heart of France—

He dances, he dances, night and day,

Bronze shapely faun, all life's entrancing dance.

He dances, he dances—

By lime trees flowering, or by opal grey

Pale rosy fadings of the frosty day,

Spirit of fine delight, he dances—

Dear heart of France, he dances, gay.

To fretful man one single speech have all  
Those myriad stars : but that how clear, how  
great—

“ Be still before our eyes,” their voices call,  
“ And to each other generous ; for hate  
Is small ; and we should be like lamps you  
set

In gardens at fair festivals to light  
On from the halls of dance, to groves where  
yet

A deeper beauty fills the silent night.”

SOME weep for common things,  
Hunger and pain ;  
To them no music ever sings,  
To them the sweet air never brings  
One fancy's strain.

Some, free to mark each touch,  
Each mood that grows,  
Are drawn to seek too far, too much ;  
And grieve for failure. Grieve with such,  
But pity those.



## THE PLANTATION.

THE valley's space was chill and dead,  
Night passed to day :  
The coming of the rains had spread  
The sky with grey.

A trumpet struck against the air  
Its lonely stroke ;  
The labourers who sleeping were  
To toil awoke.

## HUMAYOUN

THE library is finished, set high up with four  
Clear arches for the air's pure feathery wings  
To pass, and day no dust or tumult brings  
But colours merely glow and shine the more.  
Within the corners rich with wisdom's store  
The sage gives knowledge and the poet  
sings,  
Nor fitter roof for silent communings  
Has ever arched a cool and marble floor.  
  
Revolving was it those dear hours to be  
Here in the converse of the true, the strong,  
That he, the Emperor, slipped upon the  
stair ?

What had he seen that he might never see

Had he remained amidst the city's throng

Nor sought the tempting stillness that  
was there.

LET me pass in and by your side  
Watch in the chamber that your sorrow knows.  
Night reigns as yet,  
Not yet the grey, a breath before the rose.

Thus the long hours may seem less long,  
Sadness less sad, since two must bear it, less.  
While near to us  
Gather pale hopes that neither dared to guess.

## KWANNON

THE figure, dark beneath the niche's golden  
roof,

Dwells in its deep seclusion, tender yet most  
far aloof—

The carven forms are writing of the peace  
divine—

And music of all peace the shapings of the  
deepening shrine.

Kwannon the merciful, guardian of life's further  
ways,

We come towards you from the burden of the  
streets and days.

Since you are powerful, by the power  
Of nobler passion to release  
From baser passion's evil hour ;  
Since you are merciful, by kindness, to your  
peace.



IN that a shadow seemed to pass  
Across the mirror's polished sheen,  
Lurks there a shade within the glass  
Because that passing shade has been ?

It holds the power to mirror still  
A cloud, a flower, the star, the smile ;  
Draw but a curtain if you will  
Before it, let it rest awhile.

## COGNITIO

WHITE soul, be blessed of me, although  
Words scarcely reach your wildered sense,  
For torches of red passion go  
A-dance around your innocence.

White figure in their midst, the moon  
Touches each tender shuddering line ;  
A mist to be, a nothing soon—  
And so at last entirely mine.



## AT CAIRO

Here would I wish my friend to stand,  
In Hasan's mosque, when I am dead.  
The heat sinks down on all the land,  
Mellow the sky grows overhead.

The four great arches hold the shade  
Recessful for the peace of prayer,  
And round the court most nobly made  
Great letters speak God everywhere.

All should he see, as I now see  
Arches and sky and carven writ ;  
Then, as a chance, some thought of me  
Should come, as his eyes rest on it.

## PROCESSIONAL

CLEAR on my heart I thought love stamped  
its sign,  
Until one spoke who said: "Dark knots  
entwine  
Your heart." Then love or hatred which is  
mine ?

And I, what am I ? I, this thing called I ?  
The rocks cast back the whirring useless cry.

Let us pass on and leave this struggling  
thing,  
This battling thing, which is the tangled  
puzzling

Of "what am I." Let silence come. We  
bring

Our best to deck the shrine, our utmost  
offering.

## AEOLIAN

HARP that dead hands in the deep garden  
hung,

Whose are the shudderings of your sobs and  
cries?

The long night through your helpless strings  
have rung

Racked by the wind beneath the mad moon's  
eyes.

Echo you hold of nameless dead regret ;  
And our pain too will sometime come to be  
Part of your helpless painless pain, and yet  
To us it seems the world's one threnody.

THE opal's world of tender greys—  
(Long starlit nights and fair succeeding days)—  
A casual turn  
Shows where the hidden lightnings burn.

Cruel can those be who gentle are—  
(No smile to-day, to-night no liquid star)—  
Such opaline  
Strange gem of change is yours and mine.

LONDON, 1883

THE dusty western sky is red  
With fragments of earth's vital fire,  
It seems a breathing of the dead  
And shred of drifting dead desire.

Wide glory turns this quivering dust  
To splendour which our eyes possess,  
Content ; since life and love and lust  
All must transform to shapelessness.

O MAY the gods forgive us, that we prize  
Beyond the spring and summer of all things  
One single life, that in our eyes  
One beauty thrones, that all the rest above  
One accent sings.

They will forgive us surely, since the whole  
Wide realm is theirs to love, as we each love  
That single thing, the spring of each man's  
    life and soul.

## MADRIGAL

LOVE came to them with music fraught  
Borne on the summer air unsought,  
More sweet than hope, more keen than thought ;  
And slew each baser pain.

So perfect was the golden cup  
Their clasped hands lifted trembling up,  
To drink the wine within the cup ;  
On lips with longing fain—

O love, come then and gently sing  
How dim death lurks in everything,  
That even thou canst never bring  
High joy to these again.



## A POET. FRESCO AT ORVIETO

THE page half-written and the half-page  
white—

Untouched beneath his hand the rest he knows  
Are blank unwritten still and spotless quite.  
How shape the verses and the tale of those?

A breath upon his shoulder, and he turns  
There to the window, and so comes to see  
Sun blazing, while his thought so feebly burns :  
He shuts the book contented. It will be.

## SEGESTE

TEMPLE of the stately pillars, temple with the  
spacious gaze—

Never made complete for worship, never made  
the home of praise—

He, perhaps, whose mind had formed you, saw  
you as you should have been

With the shrine amidst the pillars that the  
God might pass between.

Little knew he that his handcraft, thus un-  
finished, would outlast

Other works of crowned completion, signal of  
his people's past.

Signal of a note of living, straight regarding,  
high and free,

With its pride of Greek perfection and its gaze  
on hill and sea.

## SECUNDRA

STILL as a dead man's breath,  
The heat of the day, nor soon  
Will its power abate.

And wide with the width of death,  
The path that leads to the tomb  
Of Akbar the Great—

High seen many a mile,  
By plains wide, dusty and pale,  
The tomb in its might—  
Where deep in the haughty pile  
The heats all shiver and fail  
As in winter night.

There's the place where he lies  
Dim chamber spacious and grey  
And lit by one ray.

But up in the blue of the skies,  
High in the blaze of the day,  
Is a courtyard sunny and clear,  
Bordered with marble as fine as lace,  
Paved with a floor that the angels might pace,  
Might tread with feet unshod,  
Looking with angels' eyes  
By the bright false tomb that is here,  
Looking to see the Koh-i-noor shine,  
The great, proud stone that was, Akbar, thine,  
Till thou wentest from it to God.

## A ROMAN PEASANT

THERE lurks within his sultry depths of eyes  
A vague remembrance of forgotten thought,  
Reflection there of deeds his fathers  
wrought,  
Triumphal stillness like his Roman skies.  
For very slowly ancient wonder dies  
From nations' veins, and his perchance  
are fraught  
With mantling blood of one whom sages  
taught  
The Grecian wisdom, with all Rome his prize.  
Dominion, knowledge, pride and pomp of state,  
Move in procession, mingle into dust,

Leaving their relics on the weary plain ;  
And eyes like his. But life is prouder, great,  
Most persevering, though expire it must  
By very strength, to wake elsewhere again.

SINCE as the flying leaves we are  
Caught from the earth's warm breast,  
Wrecks on the wind, that hurried far  
Fly on from home and rest :

Lean back upon the wind, poor leaves,  
A chant is in its breath,  
With power to drown the note that grieves  
For pathos of your death.



AMIDST our friends beside their living eyes  
and speech,

There comes the presence of some far  
unvoiceful place :

And half in dread and half in strange desire,  
reach

Our souls towards that solitary silent  
space.

And when we live where solitude unbroken  
dwells,

Pulsation beats within the air, and round  
us sing

Strange melodies unformed and broken chimes  
of bells,  
As though the wind half held dim sounds  
it could not bring.

## SELINONTO

AT Selinonto where the city stood,  
The pillars sleep like rocks in silent rest,  
For Nature gathers to her flowery breast  
The pageant of the temples' goodlihood.  
Hardly a sign to mark another mood  
From her proud stillness; scarcely had  
we guessed  
That fair and bright with sacred garlands  
dressed,  
All white and blue and red, the temples stood.  
  
These stones are like tired faces whence has fled  
The touch of youth and life, which all but  
dead,

Hold yet some sign of human use and  
grace.

Above the sky spreads wide its calm decree,  
While past the ruins down the sapphire sea,  
Keen to the westward maned white horses  
race.

## ONLY

As a flower on a river's  
Sharp eddying whirls :  
As a red leaf that shivers  
And shuddering twirls  
To the ground : so are we in our way.

Save that only a dreaming,  
A heaven-sent pride,  
Makes us each in the seeming  
Of truth, set aside  
His own life : so are we not as they.

That "only" and therefore  
All strength of desire,

Of the hope, and the wherefore  
Each soul is a-fire  
And all love in their fashion and day.

## OASIS

YOU watch as I do that full fountain there.  
The sky is rainless and the white clouds pass,  
The rocks are burning, the wide earth is bare,  
Here only are there flowers and fresh-hued grass.

Surely now somewhere in some distant place  
The rain is falling with its rustling sound,  
And lulled in ecstasy of sky-fed grace  
The grasses whisper to the moistened ground.

And thence amid mountains,  
That so arid seem,  
Flow on the fountains  
. . . . .  
And so dreamers dream.

## BEETHOVEN

A MASS of mighty chords in strength,  
Aroused from Aeons' slumber deep,  
As though upon a world of sleep  
The voice creative moved at length.

Transfusing tender pure and strong  
Melodious voice—and all around  
In undertones the torrents' sound  
Expands the high sustainèd song.

And as we listen throne on throne  
The shadowed mountains sombre grow,  
And sunset splendour lights the snow  
On heights that dwell apart, alone.



## SNOW

THE snow enwraps the silent land,  
The earth is white, the sky is grey,  
Bright tho' sunless seems the day,  
Silent as a desert sand.

Neither moves a breath of air,  
Labour ceases, birds are still :  
Is it then the snow that will  
Shroud us too who living were ?

Wrap us round and make to pass  
All our tumult and our pain ;  
Vexed not evermore again  
Hidden as to-day the grass ?

As the sound of the bell  
Of a flock on the hills  
In a moist cool land ;  
As the depth of a well  
That a sure spring fills  
Through a white clean sand ;  
So is the voice that I faintly hear.

## NOR YES NOR NO

HE was no bearer of the torch  
Nor caught by any God-sent flame ;  
No prophet in the temple's porch :  
Nor worthy of a poet's name,  
For praise or blame.

Merely one awoke from sleep  
Come to wonder how the day  
May be, will be ; and to creep  
Through the darkness, draw away  
Curtains that the darkness keep :  
So to see the morning's grey  
Fill a valley broad and deep.

THERE is no name for it, no sound.  
It is beyond our life, our death ;  
More tender than the softest breath  
In meadows where sweet flowers abound ;  
More solemn than the breakers' strength  
When tempests catch their crested length  
And surging drag the stricken ground :

There is no sound for it, no name.





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